



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 13, 2010

Media Contact:

Jessica Higdon

Press Secretary

Office of the Mayor

E-mail: jhigdon@indy.gov

Office: 317-327-3649

Cell: 317-281-5817

TRANSCRIPT OF MAYOR GREG BALLARD'S 2010 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Thank you Justin for your kind words.

Just last month Justin's company, BC Forward announced it was adding 200 high-wage jobs in Indianapolis.

Thank you for your continued investment in our city and its people.

Thank you everyone for coming tonight to one of our city's most enduring and important landmarks and I thank former Deputy Mayor John Krauss, Max Anderson and everyone involved with the Museum for having us here this evening.

Also, please allow me to acknowledge my wife of over 27 years...Winnie. As many of you may know, Winnie is spearheading our "Bank On Indy" program to encourage the unbanked to open bank accounts and be responsible with their money.

It's a terrific program, and, if I may say, she's a terrific spokeswoman.

Elected officials, community activists, and neighborhood leaders...about one year ago, we were all at the Christel House Academy for the State of the City address. At that time, I detailed my vision to make Indianapolis the most livable big city in America. A destination city for people and companies, tourists and educators.

I stand here before you to state plainly that while there is always work to do in a city as metropolitan and diverse as Indianapolis, much work was done in 2009 to make our city more livable, more attractive to families,

and more attractive to businesses and the jobs they bring. And because of this, the state of our city is growing stronger.

Being a more livable city starts with creating a climate conducive to creating jobs and economic opportunity for all.

We stand at a critical moment of our city's economic development. Indianapolis knows no immunity to the ills of the credit market, or the jobs crunch, or the home foreclosures that swept the country. Unemployment went up and home values fell, so the single biggest asset many of us own is no longer the safety net it once was.

Businesses that were once operating profitably, and employing our family and friends had to slash costs and struggled to make ends meet.

Suffice it to say, the current economic climate, the most severe since the Great Depression, remains very challenging. But our local economy is doing far better than most, so we are better poised than others to sustain a welcome recovery.

Our goal is to make Indianapolis the most attractive place in the nation for the creation and retention of good jobs.

In the most recent data available, of the top 13 American cities, Indianapolis had the second lowest unemployment rate. In fact, our unemployment rate is lower than the state's and lower than the nation's.

I know this is small comfort to those currently out of work, seeking an opportunity to provide for themselves and their families. And so that's why I come before you tonight to state clearly that my administration is using every available resource to retain and create jobs in Marion County.

When it comes to attracting and retaining jobs in Indianapolis, our stability is an asset but we can never stand still.

Our relative economic stability comes in part from the fundamentals: a lower rate of crime, a now predictable tax climate, and a government that works with companies and entrepreneurs to foster job creation and economic development.

We have also aligned the efforts of the Indianapolis Private Industry Council—IPIC—and Indianapolis Economic Development Inc—IEDI—our city's main economic development organizations.

In 2009, my administration, working with IEDI , secured commitments for retaining or attracting more than 11,000 jobs in Marion County. This represents the second highest annual number in the last nine years—a terrific performance in the middle of this tough recession.

In fact, tonight I am pleased to announce that Stericycle, an Indianapolis-based provider of medical waste disposal services, is expanding its operations in our city and creating 109 new jobs by the end of 2010. Some of Stericycle's executives are here tonight, and I just want to say thank you for investing in your hometown.

In fact, during the two years of my administration, commitments for retained or attracted jobs total more than 20,000. During that same time period, business leaders also have made commitments totaling more than \$470,000,000 of capital investment in our community.

Just as with crime statistics, the numbers represent more than just improvement in our effort, they represent improvement in the quality of life within our city for our families.

And to those who feel that too much business growth is fueled by tax abatements, let me offer this: in 2009 less than 20 percent of the \$157 million in capital investment was incentivized with tax abatement.

Last year, for example, for every dollar we offered in abatement for a non-speculative project, more than 18 dollars were privately committed.

We have a two-year average of more than 17 dollars of private funds returned to one dollar abated. This is a stronger return on investment than in any year since the city began tracking the statistic in 2001, and we outperformed some years by 20 percent, 100 percent and in one case, 500 percent.

Time and again in the last two years, our economic development staff, skillfully led by Deputy Mayor Nick Weber and Scott Miller at IEDI, has been working to make Indianapolis more attractive to businesses that create good jobs.

The return on investment for our economic efforts is astounding when you consider we spend only about \$500,000 a year on the organization tasked with growing wealth and opportunity for our entire community.

We need IEDI to be an economic driver that will act in concert with the city and as a development investment partner for critical deals to bring jobs and capital to Indianapolis.

What IEDI needs to continue delivering is the resources to be this driver. So tonight I am announcing an investment in IEDI of \$3.5 million.

Of this amount, \$1.5 million will be used to grow the capacity of the organization, working with more businesses, making more sales calls, promoting Indianapolis at more conferences, and, working in conjunction with Carolin Requiz-Smith of my office, spearheading the international business efforts of the city.

And, as part of my 2011 budget, *and for each year thereafter*, we will propose that IEDI be appropriated sufficient funds for sustained job creation in Indianapolis. Never before has the city committed to invest so much year over year to create jobs.

The remaining \$2 million will be used to invest in properties to spur development, address infrastructure challenges that block private investment, serve as an incentive resource to secure projects for Indianapolis, or any other endeavor that will create jobs in Marion County.

In recent years, we have lost major jobs opportunities in the core of our community – where redevelopment costs are often the highest, and the need the greatest – because there was no entity to level the playing field.

This investment will help address that problem.

A year ago, the biggest issue facing the city was our need to protect the 66,000 jobs related to the Indianapolis convention industry. Tough choices had to be made, but we've helped fashion a solution that protects these jobs.

For the number of convention jobs to grow, we need to invest in the Indianapolis Convention and Visitors Association and its mission.

As such I am seeking an additional \$1.5 million for the ICVA to bolster our commitment to attract the biggest and the best conventions in the world.

Recently, the ICVA has sought support from the philanthropic community for matching gifts worth \$8 million to make the investments needed to promote our city, including our art and cultural institutions, to a broad audience.

My proposed investment of \$1.5 million leverages these private funds to allow the ICVA to promote the tremendous recreational, cultural, artistic and convention assets of our city to potential visitors.

Now, no three vital interests of our city align more critically than economic development, public safety and education.

In a very real way, education is a key motivator of economic growth and an accurate predictor of present and future crime rates.

This fact is just one reason I champion groups like Teach for America and the Mind Trust to bring educational innovation to Indianapolis, why I applaud IPS for expanding its exciting magnet school program, why I support the Indianapolis Chamber's Common Goal initiative. It's why I encourage mentoring, tutoring and community school efforts.

In my office, we are fortunate to have Karega Rausch and his bright and dedicated Charter Schools staff. But this staff is limited in numbers. And now is the time for increased investment in this amazing endeavor.

We are all proud of the accomplishments of the Mayor-sponsored Charter schools.

It bears repeating that since 2008, 90 percent of Mayor-sponsored Charter School graduates have gone on to college!

One of the things I learned in my 23 years in the Marine Corps, however, was that a change in mission frequently requires a change in resources.

And it's time we broadened the scope and mission of the Mayor's Charter Schools office to match its responsibilities.

Therefore, I will seek \$175,000 to transform the Charter Schools initiative into an Office of Education Innovation.

My vision for the Office of Education Innovation will include re-structuring the Charter Schools office to reflect the important work they are doing across the educational spectrum in our city, where good work is being done daily for kids and families.

While mayor-sponsored charter schools will remain the most important function of the Office of Education Innovation, it will also serve as a countywide hub for education initiatives and data sharing.

Marion County is home to 11 public school districts, 21 public charter schools, and more than 100 private, non-public, and parochial schools. Yet there is not one source—an information hub—that serves as a resource

across geographic and educational boundaries. It is long past time that we bring our best and brightest educators together for one conversation.

So to fund this critical adjustment in our economic development policy, to reorient our tools to better recognize the challenge facing a developed city, to leverage private dollars, to enhance our work in education and to invest in our publicly-owned facilities, I am asking the City-County Council for a fiscal ordinance to spend a total of \$5.5 million and set our community on a course of enhanced economic growth.

It's no secret how tight our city budget is. That's why I propose that the \$5.5 million of expenditures should be paid for with collections from past economic development deals.

The opportunity to collect these funds are incorporated into the public-private partnership agreements we establish on tax abatement projects and call for fines to be paid by a company if it cannot follow through on its commitments.

Our duty to effectively monitor companies and their commitments to the community in exchange for incentives is one we take very seriously. Businesses need to know we take their commitments seriously, because we take job creation and retention very seriously. If businesses are unable to perform as outlined in their agreements, the city should recover the tax incentives.

Later this month, I will ask the Metropolitan Development Commission to begin the process of revoking a number of tax abatements representing the potential for \$5.5 million.

For instance, last year long-time Indianapolis employer and good corporate citizen, Navistar announced they would be shuttering their plant, which through various owners, had been a fixture in our community for generations.

Previous administrations partnered with Navistar to support major capital investments and job creation activities. After long and deliberate negotiations with the city, the company has decided not to close the facility but in fact retain some jobs on the site.

They have acknowledged, however, they cannot meet all of their commitments and have agreed to pay Indianapolis \$5 million. We will begin the process of working with additional remaining companies on financial settlement terms and cancellation of their abatements.

Much of what needs to be done with these economic development dollars needs to be done in areas that are particularly hard hit in tough economic times.

At a time when taxpayers' paychecks may be shrinking, or worse, going away, government owes it to everyone to be faithful stewards of the peoples' money.

A hallmark of my administration has been, and will continue to be, a commitment to fiscal responsibility. Two years into my term, I can stand before you to say we have kept our commitment to the Indianapolis taxpayer.

Despite the fact that municipalities across the country are laying off workers, instituting furloughs, or flat out eliminating basic services and even shutting down for entire days, your city government is avoiding these drastic measures and looking for ways to improve services through efficiency.

For the second year in a row we have produced an honestly-balanced budget. That means for the second year in a row your city and county government is spending less money than it receives in taxes.

Not only did we balance the budget, we also put millions in a rainy day fund for the first time in our city's history. Let me say that again: we have a rainy day fund for the first time in our city's history.

We've done this through a relentless search for efficiencies in how we perform our work and a genuine and sustained commitment to improving how we deliver government services.

For example two years ago, the Department of Public Works was looking at a massive \$185 million engineering project to allow us to better treat roughly 300 million gallons of wastewater per day at the Belmont plant.

Through value engineering and driven by my administration's determination to make taxpayer dollars stretch as far as possible, this same project is now scheduled for a bid award at a cost of \$53.4 million—a savings of more than \$130 million to taxpayers, while delivering a higher quality of service.

Another example would be the Parks Department. Our drive to improve the quality of Parks is one of reasons cited by the Lilly Endowment when they decided to award the Parks Foundation a grant in the amount of \$7.3 million to address capital improvement needs. Folks, this is the largest grant in the history of the Parks Foundation.

We've also encouraged public-private partnerships with companies like Citizens Energy Group and Brightpoint.

As part of its Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, Citizens Energy donates time and talent to revitalizing an Indianapolis park.

Last year, it was Brookside Park. This year, tomorrow in fact, Citizens Energy Group and partnering contractors are contributing more than \$110,000 of in-kind work and hundreds of hours of employee volunteer service to renovate Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and the Pride Park Community Center.

Also, as volunteers, Brightpoint's employees performed work on the Watkins Park Family Center and sports fields. In all, over \$100,000 worth of work and volunteer hours were donated through their generosity.

Our parks simply would not be the same without this public-private charitable partnership.

With the economy still on the mend, and the state hit hard by diminishing revenues, let me state plainly that the next city budget will be the toughest one yet.

We will weather this fiscal storm. We will because of the benefits of our fiscal discipline these past years and because, in City Controller David Reynolds, we have one of brightest and most respected financial minds found at any level of government.

Another area where we've vastly improved how government works for you is the Mayor's Action Center.

As one of the primary methods through which citizens request the very services their tax dollars provide, the Mayor's Action Center simply must be held to the highest standard.

And I can say, unequivocally, that under the direction of Sarah Taylor, the MAC is living up to that standard.

At the same time that we are handling over five percent more calls than two years ago, call abandoned rates have decreased by 87 percent.

Also, for the first time in the MAC's history, we are calling you so we can make sure we've addressed your problem. I made the 25,000th outbound call myself just a few months ago, and by the end of 2009 the MAC made just over 30,000 outbound calls.

The turnaround at the MAC is indicative of our effort to reinvigorate all of local government and listen to the taxpayer.

Listening to you and making the government you pay for actually work for you is an important part of my administration. And so is shrinking the size of government.

Even after Mayor Lugar's Unigov and Mayor Peterson's IndyWorks, local government here still looks more like "Multigov."

Last year, I proposed Unigov 2.0, a legislative package to further streamline township, city, and county government. This year, we are focusing on reform where it's needed the most—the township level.

My Unigov 2.0 plan will bring greater efficiency, transparency, and accountability to your government. With township government occurring outside of the view of the public and our City-County Council, there is limited oversight of their budgets, tax rates, and effectiveness—as well as limited accountability.

We must hold townships accountable. The question is: how do we do that?

First and foremost, we need to finish the consolidation of township fire departments and EMS services into the Indianapolis Fire Department. We should reform township assistance so that there are uniform standards across our county and an organization, namely the Health & Hospital Corporation, that has a proven track record of assisting those in need.

We should shift township government's excess funds to the City so that they can be appropriated by the City-County Council for investment in sidewalks and other infrastructure.

Ultimately, if my proposal passes, by 2013, township government will be thoughtfully transitioned into city-county government.

Reforming government is more than just a way to save taxpayer money—although that's critically important. It's also a way to show the business community that we are serious about competing in a 21st-century economy without being burdened by a 19th-century government.

Now, we all know what Job One is in my administration and that's public safety. You know it because I've said it so many times over the past two years, and because, we are delivering.

Our commitment to fighting crime starts with the tremendously smart, dedicated, and hard-working police officers, firefighters, sheriff's deputies and park rangers putting their lives on the line to protect Indianapolis and its residents.

The murder count in the IMPD service district is less than 100 for the first time since 1993. Murders throughout the entire county were down double-digits and incidents of rape were down 18 percent.

It is imperative that we remember these are not mere numbers. They represent people – human beings.

We were able to make our city safer in large part because of former Public Safety Director and Marion County Prosecutor Scott Newman. He is here with us tonight, and I ask everyone to acknowledge this public servant who has spent his career making us feel safer.

Our newly appointed Public Safety Director Dr. Frank Straub is a proven, results-oriented leader when it comes to fighting crime in a large, diverse urban environment. He has the experience and intellectual background to improve our Public Safety Department in Indianapolis, the willingness to work constructively with our public safety professionals, the awareness to understand that our city finds strength in its diversity, and the determination to stand with our communities and against the criminals.

He's even agreed to stop being a New York Jets fan now that he's here. Dr. Straub, will you please stand so you can receive a warm Hoosier welcome?

Public safety is Job One because we must feel safe to effectively host conventions, to keep and bring jobs to Indianapolis, to improve the education of our children and to have fun with our friends and family. There is no separating the impact public safety has on the betterment of our city. When government officials take that for granted, they do so at all of our peril.

We distributed over \$4 million in community crime prevention grants last year and this year, and reinstituted community policing. So your officers are now in the neighborhoods asking “what’s happening?”—not just “what happened?”

All of our wonderful venues, our beautiful parks, and our attractive trails lose their value if people are afraid to visit them.

The commitment to making Indianapolis safer is fundamental in my administration and we will not waver from this commitment.

As you know, we have been working hard over the past two years to address the problems of every area of the city – through our neighborhood liaisons and our community outreach programs.

But as someone who grew up and went to school in the heart of Indianapolis, I know that this central area of our city must also not be forgotten.

And in the first two years of my administration, downtown and the surrounding areas have not been forgotten. We have invested millions of dollars to improve the quality of life of inner-city residents, their economic prospects, and their neighborhoods.

We cannot have a prosperous Indianapolis without a prosperous urban core. We are fortunate to haveolgen Williams as deputy mayor of Neighborhoods working hard on that challenge.

Politics and voting histories cannot matter when you're trying to build a better city. That's one of the reasons I authorized the spending of millions of dollars to fix pools in Center Township that were leaking millions of gallons of water a year.

It's why I made public safety job one and appointed a public safety director who is committed to diversity in the police and fire department.

It's why the money donated by the Lilly Endowment will go primarily to parks serving the urban core.

It's why my office is partnering with Congressman Andre Carson's office so that we will have a fair and complete count in the 2010 Census.

It's why I wholeheartedly supported the recently-passed referendum to build a new Wishard and make sure those who need health care have access to the best care available.

It's why I asked my team at Corporation Counsel to fix the City's broken Equal Opportunity Division.

It's why Corporation Counsel turned a 200-case backlog of discrimination claims dating back to the previous administration into a zero-case backlog of discrimination claims. And we've reduced the adjudication period for discrimination claims from 700 days to 90 days.

It's why my Administration has been doing outreach to the minority community to get the word out that this city is open for business and ready to handle your discrimination claims in a timely and respectful manner.

It's why 49 percent of my board and commission appointments represented women or minorities.

It's why I am fighting against the blight of abandoned homes by seeking as much money as possible to rebuild those neighborhoods most affected by this problem.

It's why we have expanded our Charter Schools program, so that parents of children who need a different educational environment have an attractive and successful educational option.

It's why we have revamped and revitalized our First Tee program so inner-city youths can learn the wonderful game of golf through the Indy Parks system.

It's why we have, under the leadership of Director Greg Wilson, made minority and women business development a keystone of our economic development strategy unlike anything seen before in our city. We must have a stronger urban core and we will.

In fact, it's why I am a big fan of the "Down Home Cooking" restaurant just down the street from where we are tonight on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

It's why \$2 million will be invested to remodel the neighborhood surrounding this restaurant to make it more attractive to businesses and use art and streetscapes to tell the story of this historic neighborhood.

And we have the owners of Down Home Cooking in the audience tonight—Sam and Vee Thompson, will you please stand and be applauded for your entrepreneurial spirit?

In the coming weeks, we will call on all of Indianapolis to help us do one of the most important, fundamental things we can do as a community to help keep our city on track for positive growth.

2010 is a Census year.

Working with Congressman Andre Carson's office, we created the bipartisan Complete Count Committee to make sure everyone is counted. The health of our city, and those most in need depend on it.

Let me repeat, no neighborhood will be left behind in our drive to make Indianapolis a more livable city, no business will be left behind in our drive to create jobs, no student will be left behind in our drive for better schools, and no block will be left behind in our drive for a safer Indianapolis.

We must embrace creative ways to make the old Indianapolis neighborhoods the new Indianapolis.

This vision for the future will only become reality if we are willing to tackle generations-old problems with intelligent and innovative thinking. "We've never done it that way before" is not a phrase you'll ever hear in my administration.

The City Market has fallen on rough times.

My administration is determined to face the challenges plaguing this proud landmark.

We have solicited bids and ideas from community organizations, engaged the City Market board, and appealed to civic-minded groups—all to revitalize the Market.

It is also clear that we must embrace sustainable technologies and principles if we want to be cost-effective in our work and our structures.

Shortly after my administration began, we created the Office of Sustainability to serve as the driver for our green initiatives. It is the first office of its kind in our city government history.

We have made tremendous progress under the leadership of Director Karen Haley.

In 2009, we added over 20 miles of bike lanes to our roads and were designated a “Bicycle Friendly City” by the League of American Bicyclists. Additionally, we will be installing another 11 miles this spring, and have another 21 miles in the design phase.

Last year, we conducted a thorough review of 70 city-owned buildings to gauge the potential for these buildings to be more energy efficient.

As a result of the review, work will commence this year to retrofit these facilities—including the City Market and the City-County Building—with energy saving green technologies. This work will diminish the environmental footprint of these buildings and save approximately \$2 million a year.

We can’t talk about sustainability in our city without mentioning the efforts of the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

As you walked into this building, you may have noticed banners advertising the Virginia B. Fairbanks 100 Acres Art and Nature Park on the IMA grounds. Formerly a gravel pit and construction area, the Park has transformed a troubled site into a lush and wild natural terrain.

The City of Indianapolis and the museum recently agreed to terms allowing the museum to develop and maintain a parking area and main entrance to the park on land owned by the City.

We were pleased to be able to partner with the IMA in hopes of attracting even more visitors to this unique site, and I am particularly pleased that the parking area will be a zero-runoff project utilizing bioswales and native grasses to filter storm water.

You’re also sitting in a room - the floor of which was 100 percent made with recycled tires.

In fact, this theater was constructed with recycled glass, recycled wood, recycled carpet, and recycled concrete.

If someone tells you recycling can't be beautiful, they've never been to the Toby Theater.

This wonderful museum is a profoundly important and well-established leader in the cultural life of our City.

And having just had its 125th birthday, it has never looked better.

What may be less well-known, however, is that there are more than 200 arts and cultural organizations and thousands of artists who help infuse the soul of Indianapolis with creativity and energy.

Not only do the arts help make our city a place we all want to call home, they add to our quality of life in other ways, such as the generation of more than \$50 million in tax revenue.

In every budget I have submitted, I have advocated supporting the Indianapolis Arts Council with \$1 million so more than 50 community institutions can offer education and outreach activities for our residents.

For each dollar we invest in the Arts, research shows generally five new dollars are returned to the local economy.

We should be very proud and very supportive of the arts community here in Indianapolis.

During last year's state of the city address, I announced the creation of the Infrastructure Advisory Commission, chaired by the dean of Liberal Arts at IUPUI, Prof. Bill Blomquist.

Since that time, the Commission has been busy studying ways to tackle our city's infrastructure needs and holding public hearings so citizens can have their concerns heard as well.

We simply must think creatively in attacking these problems and not think narrowly when presented with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address a generations-old problem.

There's been some talk about a potential deal that could possibly generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for the city, while at the same time mitigating rate increases in water and wastewater bills that simply couldn't come at a worse time for Indianapolis families.

But, any new approach must be an agreement that represents the best interests of taxpayers, ratepayers, and the city. And as long as I'm mayor, I pledge to you that it will.

When we think of infrastructure, we think of roads, bridges, and sidewalks among other things—but we don't necessarily think about mass transit.

In 2009, I initiated a private sector committee, headed by Al Hubbard, John Neighbours, and Bob Palmer to work with our planners to study the feasibility of mass transit in Central Indiana. I asked them to evaluate all regional transportation options and develop a plan that would serve as the foundation for further discussion. Mass transit is about connecting our city's neighborhoods with our city's businesses. It's about connecting the core of our downtown with the suburbs and beyond.

We've built new bike lanes. We're starting new trails and lengthening others. We've invested millions of dollars in our traditional infrastructure and are discussing ways to carefully invest much more.

Our conversation is about the inter-connectivity of our entire infrastructure with our parks and other spaces and our connection to the rest of the world. Modernizing how we move around this city is a signal to the rest of the world that Indianapolis is ready to join the front ranks of 21st-century urban environments.

In 2010, our mass transit discussion won't be about traffic congestion, but rather about how improving our transportation structure and strategy will improve the health of our regional economy and make us even more competitive for companies wanting to bring their jobs to Indianapolis.

My administration is committed to exploring public-private partnerships for mass transit, infrastructure, enhancing our ability to generate revenue, and, finally, sponsorship deals that can relieve the burden felt by the Indianapolis taxpayer. We've laid the foundation for these discussions and these opportunities, and, for many of these ideas and possibilities, 2010 will be remembered as a year of action—action that is long overdue.

We have entered a new era of governance in Indianapolis. While we boldly build for the future, we continue to focus on the quality of life issues affecting ordinary citizens in their everyday lives—the grass roots element of governing.

My vision for a renewed Indianapolis landscape starts with the basics expected by the citizens of their government. This doesn't mean we don't embrace our past accomplishments, but rather we build on them.

It is a vision for a safer city, one in which people leave their homes and play with their children with the knowledge their government is doing all it can to protect them.

It is a vision for more representative, more efficient, more responsive government. One that treats the needs of the citizens as its highest priority.

It is a vision for an ever-increasing investment in fostering job creation and retention and sustained economic momentum. It's making sure Indianapolis's voice is heard when it comes to creating jobs and landing the most lucrative conventions.

It is a vision of diversifying our diversity to include our growing Hispanic, Chinese, Indian, and other populations and working with business leaders, entrepreneurs, and educators to promote the growth of minority businesses and to make sure our fellow citizens are, in the words of Dr. King, our brothers, not just our brothers-in-law.

It is a vision for not accepting anything less than the best we can do for every neighborhood.

It is a vision of being unafraid to reach out to the private sector to tackle problems that could have been addressed a generation ago if only the opportunity and the will were present.

It is a vision of a more sustainable, a more livable city that prospers with the aid of - and without the interference of - the political structure.

It is a vision of a transparent and responsive administration. One that listens to your views during frequent public meetings, publishes information on the city's website, holds public budget reviews, and a monthly Mayor's Night Out.

It is a vision of an administration instituting the toughest ethics laws in our city government's history—to include new rules for lobbyists who contact our elected representatives.

It is a vision of a dynamic local government unencumbered by the burdens of an outdated 19th-century configuration. One that provides the tools and leadership for a higher quality of life, but leaves the energy of initiative to the citizen, his dreams and his hard work.

One year ago, I said that what made life good is a combination of the ordinary things, but a big city that can get the ordinary things right can be an extraordinary place to live.

And because of the character and strength of its citizens, Indianapolis remains that place. We have only just begun our journey to transform our city. The fate of our shared concerns and triumphs remain intertwined. We have much to do, yet much to be proud of.

Thank you to the Indianapolis Museum of Art for hosting us tonight and to all of you for coming out this evening.

###

###